

Two Deputies Injured In Rugged Terrain Near Elsinore

July 6, 2007
Elsinore
2007-014

by Grace Manues

"We have a rescue. Down Deputies." While every call-out is important to us, this text message got my heart pumping more than most. As volunteer employees, we're members of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department family. On every mission, there is a Sheriff's Deputy there to watch our backs. They take care of us, so it was critical that we respond quickly and efficiently to render whatever assistance would be needed.

The initial page came out at 2 p.m. The heat was sweltering. Traffic was terrible, of course. But despite there having been an all night search less than twelve hours before, RMRU team members responded en masse. One of the largest initial turnouts this year included Steve Bryant, John Dempsey, Glenn Henderson, Jim and Grace Manues, Patrick McCurdy, Brad Scott, Jeff Toscas, Kevin Walker and Dave Webb.

John, Jim and I were the first RMRU members on scene as we live just twenty minutes south of the incident. Upon arriving, the Incident Commander briefed us on the situation. At approximately 11 a.m., a Sheriff's Deputy responded to a report of a woman yelling for help somewhere below the Ortega Highway near the lookout. After searching numerous (long abandoned) vehicles over the side, the Deputy was overcome by temperatures topping 100 degrees. A second Deputy came to his aid but fell/slid down the loose hillside, injuring his knee. Additional Deputies and CDF crews



Photo: Patrick McCurdy

John Dempsey returning from the field after deputies were rescued.

were dispatched to render assistance.

A CDF helicopter had been called in to airlift the injured Deputies from the field. However, that helicopter clipped its tail rotor on vegetation during the process and was pulled out of service. That's when we showed up. At the time, it was uncertain whether another helicopter would be available to airlift the Deputies, so John and Jim donned technical gear and headed in.

As it turned out, ten minutes after they started in, a second CDF helicopter arrived on scene. John and Jim continued hiking to the subject and other awaiting personnel to provide whatever assistance was needed. Thankfully, the second CDF helicopter crew did a great job and made quick work of extracting the two injured Deputies. Both were taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Although it turned out that our technical expertise wasn't needed for this incident, we were happy to be there as a precaution and for back-up. Part of why we do Search and Rescue is to give back to the community. To give back to the Sheriff's community was especially rewarding.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.